



Official Newsletter of the Human Rights Commission-Zambia || October-December 2025



Republican President Mr. Hakainde Hichilema (4th from Left), Chief Justice of Zambia Hon. Dr. Mumba Malila SC (1st from right), HRC Chairperson Dr. Pamela Sambo (centre) with other dignitaries during the 2025 International Human Rights Day Commemoration at Mulungushi International Conference Centre in Lusaka

PRESIDENT HICHILEMA REITERATES GOVERNMENT'S COMMITMENT TO HUMAN RIGHTS

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Building a sustainable human rights culture together!

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EXECUTIVE NOTE



As we bid farewell to 2025 and welcome 2026, we highlight in this edition some of the key milestones achieved in the last quarter. They include:

- Public Hearing held in Mumbwa Town and Nangoma area of Mumbwa District during which the

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Commission probed reports of widespread cases of girls being married before the age of 18 years or falling pregnant, cutting short their dreams for education. The Commission had deeper interactions with Mumbwa residents whose submissions provided great insights into the problem of early marriages and pregnancies faced in the district.

- In October, Commissioners resumed office after being reappointed and ratified by the National Assembly pursuant to the Human Rights Commission Act, No. 4 of 2024. The Act places enhanced functions, powers and obligations on the Commission to promote and protect human rights.
- At the inaugural meeting held in December, Commissioners reviewed several cases of human rights violation or abuse, which were effectively resolved by providing appropriate redress.

- The Commission closed 2025 with the Commemoration of the International Human Rights Day on 10th December.
- Through a variety of activities carried out at national and provincial levels, which included celebrations graced by the Republican President in Lusaka, the Commission raised public awareness and advocated for concrete action on key human rights issue in Zambia.
- On 5th December, the Commission published the Access to Information Act Guidelines in the government gazette in line with section 38 of the Act.

As we look forward to 2026, I appeal for continued and enhanced collaboration in promoting and protecting human rights in Zambia and beyond.

Mbololwa Wamunyima (Ms.)

DIRECTOR-GENERAL



President Hichilema reiterates Government's Commitment to Human Rights

The President of the Republic of Zambia, Mr. Hakainde Hichilema, reaffirmed his government's commitment to promoting and protecting human rights in the country through practical policies that enhance human dignity, justice and freedom for all, as he urged the United Nations and the international community to do more to actualise the commitments enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR).

Speaking during the International Human Rights Day commemoration held on 10th December, 2025 at Mulungushi International Conference Centre in Lusaka, President Hichilema said that human rights were daily necessities and not privileges, prompting his government to work tirelessly to improve the economy and ensure human rights safeguards.

"Treasury resources are limited, but we should show commitment...That is why our interpretation of this year's theme (Human Rights: Our Everyday Essentials) is to expand the economy, to grow the economy, so we can create opportunities for jobs, for business... the cycle goes around, enhancing treasury income so we can support free education and the Constituency Development Fund instrument," the President said.

He said that the government policy of Constituen-



President Hakainde Hichilema speaking during human rights day commemoration in Lusaka

cy Development Fund was critical to the enjoyment of human rights, as it was delivering clinics with maternity wings and clean running water, supporting free education through the provision of infrastructure and desks, among other benefits.

In actualising the UDHR, President Hichilema called for universal access to free education and reiterated his call for a fair global financial architecture to help Zambia and other low-income countries grow their economies, which will help them fulfill their human rights commitments.

Speaking at the same event, Human Rights Commission of Zambia Chairperson, Dr. Pamela Towela Sambo, acknowledged the repealing and enactment of various pieces of legislation, such as the abolition of death penalty; repeal of the criminal offence of defamation of the President; the enactment of the Access to Information Act

and the Children's Code Act, as important steps towards strengthening accountability, advancing dignity and enhancing human rights protection in Zambia.

Dr. Sambo, however, noted that further reforms were needed, including repealing the Public Order Act and expanding the Bill of Rights to incorporate economic, social and cultural rights.



HRC-Z Chairperson Dr. Pamela Sambo speaking during human rights day commemoration in Lusaka

She expressed concern over the rise in violations of children's rights, despite the enactment of the Children's Code Act and urged key

stakeholders, such as the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Home Affairs and Internal Security, to do more to address the violation and abuse of children's rights. Among them are the deprivation of liberty of children in conflict with the law; limited use of diversion; delayed disposal of children's matters; and violence against children in schools, including corporal punishment.

Meanwhile, the United Nations Resident Coordinator in Zambia, Ms. Beatrice Mutali, commended the government for enacting the Access to Information Act.

Ms. Mutali stated that the implementation of this Act was crucial in promoting transparency and called for the promotion of freedoms of expression and peaceful assembly, as well as the rights to dignity, safety and security, ahead of the 2026 general elections.

"We urge all stakeholders to participate in constructive dialogue, to respect differing

perspectives and to uphold Zambia's regional and international reputation as a stable democracy," she said. Furthermore, European Union Ambassador to Zambia and the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa, Her Excellency Karolina Stasiak, acknowledged and welcomed Zambia's growing international role in the global human rights scene.

Ms. Stasiak said that Zambia's stated goal of seeking a seat on the United Nations Human Rights Council showed the country's desire to assume leadership in promoting human rights and democracy regionally and internationally.

In her address, Lusaka Province Minister, Hon. Sheal Mulyata, MP said that human rights were a cornerstone of every civilised society, as they provide assurance to the values of justice, cooperation and respect for human dignity.

Meanwhile Non-Governmental Gender Organisations Coordinating Council

(NGOCC) Chairperson, Ms. Beauty Katebe, commended the government for its continued commitment to ensuring that the country was up-to-date with various regional and international human rights and peer review mechanisms, particularly the Universal Periodic Review, and was complying with the reporting requirements on the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, the Maputo Protocol and the Kampala Convention.

Reading the speech on behalf of the NGOCC Chairperson, the Publicity Secretary, Ms. Leah Mitaba, said that "the commitment to these agreements is testament to Zambia's accountability and transparency in as far as upholding human rights is concerned."

The International Human Rights Day is commemorated globally to celebrate the adoption of the UDHR by the United Nations General Assembly on 10th December, 1948.



Stakeholders attending the 2025 International Human Rights Day Commemoration at the Mulungushi International Conference Centre, Lusaka.

HRC Chairperson Participates in Conferences on Children's Rights

From 11 to 14 November 2025, the Human Rights Commission Chairperson, Dr. Pamela Towela Sambo, participated in the regional conference of National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) in Southern Africa, themed "strengthening institutions for the promotion and protection of children's rights: from commitments to action", in Maputo, Mozambique.

Additionally, the Chairperson participated in the 46th Ordinary Session of the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACERWC), which took place from 26th November to 6th December 2025, in Maseru, the Kingdom of Lesotho.

The Maseru conference was convened to assess progress, share experiences, and strengthen commitments toward safeguarding the rights and welfare of children in Africa.

In her address to the conference, Dr. Sambo emphasised the need for collective action and unity among states to protect children's rights to survival, development and participation, acknowledging the devastating consequences of conflict, displacement, exploitation and neglect.



Left to right - Liesl Muller, Senior Attorney at Child Law Centre, South Africa, Dr. Pamela Towela Sambo, Chairperson, HRC Zambia, Commissioner Khwinana, Commissioner for children's rights at HRC South Africa and Aver Gaver, ACERWC Vice Chairperson, in Maseru, Lesotho

Furthermore, the Chairperson highlighted strides being made by Zambia in child protection, such as the enactment of the Children's Code Act, the Free Education Policy, the Social Cash Transfer Programme and the criminalisation of child marriage, stating that, despite the need to do more, Zambia was ready to share lessons with other countries.

Below are some of the picture highlights from the two meetings:



Dr. Pamela Towela Sambo making a presentation during the 46th Ordinary Session of ACERWC in Maseru, Lesotho



Left to right - Antonio Amelia, Commissioner Mozambique HRC, Nelson, President of Human Rights Club in Mozambique, Kelvin, ACAMO (children with disabilities), Mozambique, Celestine Carlos, YCAC Mozambique, Youanildy Mruina, Florian Nicole, President of the Children's Parliament, Mozambique and Dr. Pamela Towela Sambo, Chairperson, Human Rights Commission - Zambia in Maputo, Mozambique

HRC-Z, Police Collaborate to Resolve Human Rights Abuses in Luapula and Northern Provinces

The Human Rights Commission of Zambia (HRC-Z) and the Zambia Police Service in Luapula and Northern provinces intervened to rescue a 47-year-old man with mental illness from unlawful confinement and a 31-year-old Gender-Based Violence (GBV) survivor, respectively.

In March 2024, HRC-Z received a report through police officers who were conducting an operation on Chishi Island in Luapula's Chifunabuli District about the victim being tied to a tree by his own family in a manner that was cruel, inhuman, degrading and humiliating.

HRC-Z carried out investigations and established that the victim, who had seven children, began to experience a mental health condition in 2012 and was not assisted in accessing healthcare services, with the family relying on herbal treatment instead. A family member told HRC-Z that a wooden fetter, tied to the victim's left leg, was used to limit his movements, restraining him from engaging in violent actions.

The HRC-Z was extremely concerned about the way the victim was treated, which was unlawful and a serious abuse of his human rights.

The Commission, in collaboration with the Zambia Police Service, intervened to secure the rights of the victim, who was assisted in accessing medical treatment and receiving social support.

The victim was taken to Chifunabuli Rural Health Centre, where he was assessed and

enrolled in special treatment with support from Chifunabuli District Health Office.

The Department of Social Welfare was also engaged in providing social support, and consequently, the victim's household was enrolled in the Social Cash Transfer Scheme and started receiving benefits that would ease its financial burden in caring for the victim.

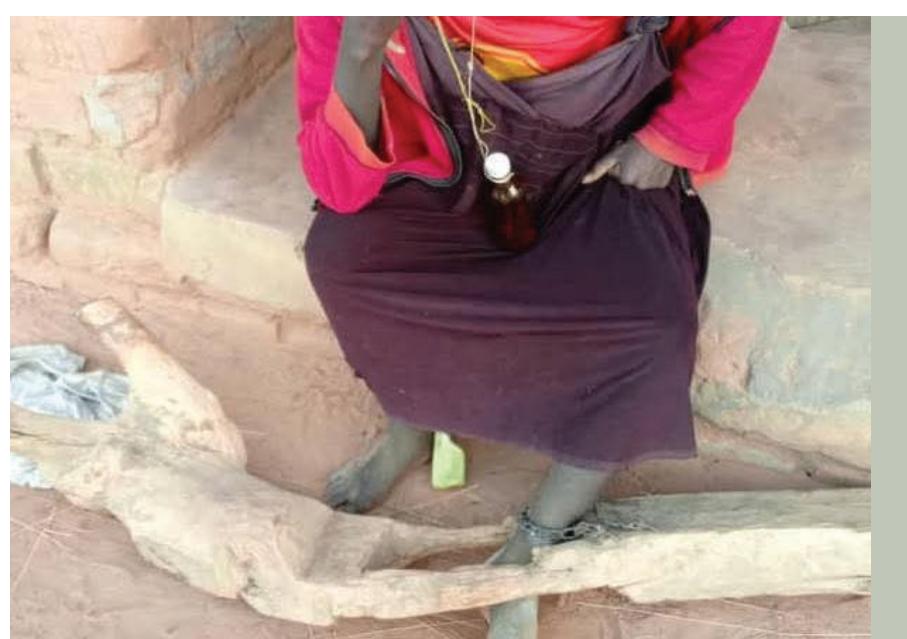
Meanwhile, the victim's family recently visited HRC-Z's Mansa Office to express gratitude for the assistance received from the Commission, reporting that the victim continued to receive medical treatment and was showing significant signs of improvement.

In another case, the HRC-Z, through its Northern Province Office in Kasama, received and successfully investigated a complaint of GBV involving a 31-year-old woman of Kasama District who had endured severe physical, emo-

tional, and economic abuse for 9 years at the hands of her husband.

Despite having reported the GBV case to the police, the victim continued to be abused by her husband until the matter was brought to the attention of the Commission, when swift action was taken to remove her from the abusive environment.

The Commission engaged the Zambia Police Service to ensure the victim's protection and the perpetrator was arrested to face prosecution. The Commission had continued to engage stakeholders to help the victim access the necessary remedies whilst ensuring that the suspect was accorded due process. These cases are striking examples of how stakeholders can collaborate to ensure that citizens' human rights are consistently respected and protected, thereby promoting human dignity.



Chifunabuli resident who was a victim of cruel, inhuman, degrading and humiliating treatment.

HRC-Z Investigates Reports of Corporal Punishment at a named Secondary School

Corporal punishment in Zambia was abolished 20 years ago, but reports indicate that teachers are still beating learners in schools. In October 2025, the Human Rights Commission of Zambia (HRC-Z) Office in Mansa received a report from a concerned parent about learners being subjected to corporal punishment at a named School in Mwansabombwe District.

HRC-Z conducted its own investigations and found that 67 learners between the ages of 12 and 15 years, mostly Form Ones, were severely beaten by three named teachers.

Investigations revealed that teachers became upset when learners reported late for lessons at the school's production unit and for preventive maintenance work, thereby beating them with sticks.

The affected learners were found with scars on their legs resulting from the beatings by the teachers, which were established to have happened on several occasions.

Acts of corporal punishment on children are criminal offences contrary to the provisions of section 22 of the Children's Code Act, No. 12 of 2022 and section 28 of the Education Act, No. 23 of 2011, and they are punishable by a one-year imprisonment term or a fine.

In addition, section 248A of the Penal Code Amendment Act, No. 15 of 2005, prohibits assaulting or occasioning actual bodily harm to a



Staff from the HRC-Z Mansa Office visiting a named Secondary School in Mwansabombwe District

child, with the offence attracting a punishment of imprisonment for a period of not less than five years but not exceeding 10 years. Upon concluding its investigations, the Commission engaged education authorities and other stakeholders in the district to ensure the rights of learners at

a named School were duly upheld.

The teachers involved in corporal punishment faced disciplinary action, while some stakeholders, including the Social Welfare Department, took an interest in the matter to help address the problem.



HRC engaging learners at the named Secondary School in Mwansabombwe District

HRC-Z Promotes Human Rights in Schools

The Human Rights Commission of Zambia (HRC-Z) has continued promoting awareness about human rights through school outreach activities at all levels of primary, secondary and tertiary to engrave a culture of respecting and upholding human rights among learners, teachers and lecturers.

On 7th November 2025, HRC-Z conducted a sensitisation session with students at Lusaka Business and Technical College where over 150 students were sensitised about their rights and freedoms.

Arakan Girls Secondary School in Lusaka also benefitted from HRC-Z outreach activities on 21st October 2025, when the Commission conducted a human rights talk where 140 learners from grades 10 and 11 classes were sensitised on their rights and responsibilities.



Learners at Arakan Girls Secondary School in Lusaka posing for a photo after a sensitisation meeting with HRC

The engagement between the Commission and Arakan Girls Secondary School provided learners with a rare opportunity to familiarise themselves with the mandate and work of the Commission, their rights and responsibilities and the different ways through which child rights violations and abuses can be reported, including through the Commission's toll-free number 8181.

"I've always heard about human rights, but

today I understand how they apply to me and how I can help others [learners know their rights]," said Rhoda Cheelo, a grade 10 pupil at Arakan Girls Secondary School.

Furthermore, HRC-Z held a public lecture at Mulungushi University in Kapiri-Mposhi District of Central Province on 15th October 2025, where it engaged 80 students on human rights and the enhanced mandate of the Commission.

And, at the awards ceremony for Kabulonga Secondary School for Boys on 10th October 2025 in Lusaka, HRC-Z participated both as a sponsor and exhibitor, awarding prizes to the highest-performing pupils in Civic Education from Grades 10, 11, and 12. At the same ceremony, HRC-Z set up an exhibition stand where it promoted civic awareness, human rights and responsible citizenship among learners, parents and teachers.

In all these outreach activities, HRC-Z distributed Information, Education and Communication (IEC) materials to stakeholders to enhance their understanding of human rights and the mechanisms for reporting human rights violations and abuses.

Other schools sensitised during the fourth quarter of 2025 included Chongwe Secondary School, Kapoche Special School in Luangwa District and Kamwala Secondary, Matero Boys Secondary and Libala Primary Schools in Lusaka.



Learners at Chongwe Secondary School listening to HRC members of staff during a sensitisation meeting

HRC Commissioners back to work



HRC-Z Chairperson, Dr. Pamela Towela Sambo (3rd from Right) with Commissioners, addressing the members of the press at Grand Palace Hotel in Lusaka

In June 2025, President Hakainde Hichilema reappointed Dr. Pamela Towela Sambo and Dr. Felicity Kayumba Kalunga to serve as Chairperson and Vice Chairperson of the Human Rights Commission respectively following the expiry of their term of office after the Human Rights Commission Act No. 39 of 1996 was repealed and replaced by the Human Rights Commission Act No. 4 of 2024.

Others appointed to serve as Commissioners were Bishop Emmanuel Y. Chikoya, Ms. Panic Mukamambo Malawo Chilufya, Ms. Laura Mary Miti and Fr. Joseph Komakoma.

The Chairperson, Vice Chairperson and the four Commissioners resumed work in October 2025 after their appointment being ratified by the National Assembly of Zambia and taking oath of office before the Republican President.

The Commissioners held their first statutory meeting on 4th December 2025 at which 193 cases were reviewed to ensure matters relating human rights violations and abuse were effectively resolved and the victims received full remedies.

Speaking during a press briefing held in Lusaka on 5th December 2025, the Chairperson described the meeting as a significant milestone for the institution, noting that

the new law places a clear obligation on the Commission to keep the nation informed about the state of human rights in Zambia.

Dr. Sambo reminded members of the public that behind every statistic is a real person whose rights have been violated, underscoring the Commission's determination to respond to such cases with greater urgency and resolve. Unlawful detention emerged as the most prevalent violation, accounting for 150 cases, more than three-quarters of all matters reviewed. The Commission expressed concern over the continued detention of suspects beyond legally prescribed periods, arrests conducted before investigations are completed, and the detention of individuals in poor conditions that, in some cases, resulted in serious illness or death.

Challenges were particularly evident in rural areas, where there are strict police bond requirements, often demanding sureties who are civil servants left many suspects in prolonged detention simply because suitable guarantors could not be found. Systemic delays in post-mortem and forensic reports, slow movement of dockets, shortages of court interpreters, and limited transport were also identified as factors contributing to extended detention periods.

The Commission further re-

viewed 27 cases involving children and found that violations persist despite the protections provided under the Children's Code Act No. 12 of 2022. For instance, 23 children in conflict with the law had been detained beyond the legally permitted 48 hours, with some held without the knowledge of parents or social welfare officers.

Through its intervention, the Commission secured the release of 11 children and facilitated their placement on diversion programmes. Delays in the disposal of children's cases, matters that should, by law, be concluded within six months were largely attributed to shortages of specialised judicial officers.

Dr. Sambo also raised concern over increasing reports of violence in schools, including corporal punishment, bullying, and gang-related attacks. Looking ahead, the Commission plans to strengthen engagement with the Zambia Police Service to promote accountability for unlawful conduct, enhance monitoring of the implementation of the Children's Code Act, and collaborate with the Ministry of Health to decentralise forensic and drug analysis services. These measures are expected to help address delays that often lead to prolonged detention of suspects.

Dr. Sambo further disclosed that the Commission would work closely with the Judiciary to accelerate the resolution of children's matters and, where necessary, pursue strategic public interest litigation as provided for under the new Human Rights Commission Act. She concluded by expressing appreciation to the media for their continued role in exposing human rights violations and abuses, and reaffirmed the Commission's resolve to safeguard the rights of every person in Zambia and ensure that all duty-bearers are held accountable.

HRC-Z strengthens stakeholder dialogue on human rights ahead of 2026 polls

As Zambia prepares for the 2026 General Elections, the Human Rights Commission of Zambia (HRC-Z) has intensified stakeholder engagement across the country, calling for peaceful, inclusive, and rights-respecting electoral processes anchored on citizen participation and respect for fundamental freedoms.

In November 2025, the Commission held a series of stakeholder engagement meetings in Kasama, Solwezi, and Mansa districts of Northern, North-Western and Luapula Provinces respectively. The engagements brought together key electoral actors to reflect on the critical link between human rights and credible elections.

Addressing stakeholders in Kasama on 5th November 2025, Commission Spokesperson and Director for Education and Training, Mr. Mweelwa Muleya explained that elections are a cornerstone of democratic governance



HRC engaging Stakeholders in Solwezi on elections and human rights

and have a direct bearing on national development. Participants were reminded of their collective duty to promote citizen participation and ensure that elections are conducted in an environment where human rights and fundamental freedoms are respected.

Mr. Muleya highlighted key rights essential to credible elections, including freedom of assembly and association, freedom of expression, the right to vote, freedom of movement, and equal protection of the law. Particular emphasis was placed on the Bill of Rights, which safeguards

fundamental freedoms such as the right to life, personal liberty, protection against torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, and the right to secure protection of the law. Law enforcement agencies were urged to avoid arbitrary arrests and detentions and to enforce the law impartially and without discrimination, while political parties were reminded to enjoy their rights and freedoms responsibly, within the confines of the law, and with due respect for public order and the rights of others. Similar messages resonated during the Commission's engagement in Solwezi District, where religious and civic leaders joined political parties, law enforcement officers, the media, and civil society organisations to call for peaceful elections.



Stakeholders in Kasama following a presentation during an engagement on elections and human rights

Speaking at the meeting, Apostle Stanley Benwa of Glory Worship Ministries International – Living Word, Solwezi Branch in North Western Province, appealed to political players to reject violence and embrace unity. "We need elections that are civilized, free, fair, and credible. Leaders

must remember that they are servants of the people and should inspire peace and unity," he said. Solwezi Acting District Commissioner, Mr. Anthony Fulwe, commended the Commission for initiating early dialogue on election-related human rights issues, noting that proactive engagement was critical as the country moves closer to the 13th August 2026 polls.

Meanwhile, the Commission's Manager for Human Rights Advocacy, Mr. Simon Mulumbi, reminded stakeholders of their shared responsibility to safeguard democracy, stressing that respect for human rights is indispensable to peaceful elections. He particularly urged law enforcement agencies to act professionally and avoid arbitrary arrests and detentions.

The Commission's engagements also placed strong emphasis on inclusion, particularly during a stakeholder meeting held in Mansa on 27th November 2025. Mr. Mulumbi called on stakeholders to uphold the



HRC engaging Stakeholders on elections and human rights in Kasama

rights of vulnerable groups, including persons with disabilities, to enable their full and effective participation in the electoral process. "How many political parties consider using sign language interpreters during engagements with the electorate? This must change as we approach the 2026 elections," he said. Stakeholders in Mansa acknowledged the challenges faced by persons with disabilities, including inaccessible polling infrastructure and undue influence when voting, and stressed

the need for full implementation of the Persons with Disabilities Act No. 6 of 2012. Mansa District Commissioner, Ms. Irene Chivweta, praised the Commission for creating a platform that allows stakeholders to collectively reflect on free and fair elections and the protection of human rights, noting that such engagements contribute to strengthening Zambia's democracy.

Across all engagements, stakeholders raised pertinent issues including the implementation of the Public Order Act, political violence, voter education, media freedom, and the protection of journalists during elections. In Mansa, the Commission further extended its outreach by featuring on One Love Radio while in Kasama it featured on Radio Mano to sensitise residents on elections and human rights. Through these engagements, the Human Rights Commission of Zambia continues to foster dialogue, build partnerships, and promote a culture of peace and respect for human rights, laying a strong foundation for credible, inclusive, and peaceful elections in 2026.



HRC engaging Stakeholders on elections and human rights in Solwezi

Beyond the 16 Days: Strengthening Zambia's stand against gender-based violence

When Zambia joined the global community to launch the 2025 Sixteen Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence, the moment marked more than the beginning of an annual campaign. It was a reaffirmation of the country's collective responsibility to confront violence against gender-based violence especially against women and girls, whether it occurs in homes, communities, institutions, or increasingly, in digital spaces.

At the national launch held at the Copperbelt University in Kitwe, the Human Rights Commission of Zambia (HRC) used the platform to call for renewed resolve, justice, and accountability in the fight against gender-based violence. For the Commission, the 16 Days serve as both a reminder of the progress made and a call to intensify efforts where gaps remain.

Speaking during the commemoration, HRC Vice-Chairperson Dr. Felicity Kayumba Kalunga highlighted the evolving nature of gender-based violence, noting with concern that abuse is increasingly shifting to online platforms. Dr. Kalunga emphasized that while technology has expanded opportunities for connection and expression, it has also created new spaces where women, girls and boys



HRC-Z Vice Chairperson, Dr. Felicity Kayumba Kalunga speaks during the national launch of 16 days of activism against GBV at the Copperbelt University in Kitwe

face harassment, intimidation, and exploitation.

Ensuring safety in digital spaces, she noted, now requires deliberate legal, policy, and institutional responses that can effectively prevent abuse and hold perpetrators accountable.

The campaign also provided an opportunity to draw attention to the Commission's ongoing work to address long-standing violations of girls' rights, particularly early and forced marriages.

Since last year, HRC has been conducting public hearings across the country to examine the scale and impact of early marriage as a systemic human right concern. "The evidence emerg-

ing from these hearings is deeply troubling. Early marriage remains widespread and, in many communities, normalized, especially in rural areas, robbing girls of their right to education, dignity, and a secure future," Dr. Kalunga observed.

Against this backdrop, the Commission acknowledged Government's efforts to address the problem, including the development of the Second-Generation National Strategy on Ending Child Marriage (2026–2030). The strategy was described as a critical framework for dismantling harmful practices and advancing the protection of girls' rights.

Throughout the campaign, HRC reaffirmed its zero-tolerance stance on all forms

of violence, stressing that gender-based violence undermines fundamental human rights from personal security and dignity to education and, in extreme cases, the right to life.

Similar reflections were echoed during the Lusaka Province launch held in Rufunsa District, where HRC Commissioner Ms. Panic Malawo Chilufya emphasized that the 16 Days of Activism align closely with Zambia's broader human rights commitments.

She noted that the fight against gender-based violence is strengthened by the State's ratification and domestication of international and regional human rights instruments aimed at protecting women and girls.

"This period of activism demonstrates the commit-

ments that have been made at national level," Commissioner Chilufya said. "Our shared responsibility is to ensure that these commitments translate into tangible protection and meaningful improvements in the lives of women and girls."

She encouraged communities to view the 16 Days not as a one-off campaign, but as an opportunity to speak out against abuse, report violations, and support survivors.

As the 16 Days drew to a close on International Human Rights Day, on 10th December, the Commission renewed its call for unity, vigilance, and justice. Central to this call was the need to end impunity and ensure that perpetrators of violence are held accountable through due process of the law.

The Commission also expressed appreciation to the United Nations system, cooperating partners, and local stakeholders for their continued collaboration, noting that progress in addressing gender-based violence depends on shared commitment and collective action.

Guided by the global theme, "Unite to end digital violence against all women and girls," the reflections from the 16 Days underscore an enduring truth: the fight against gender-based violence does not end when the campaign concludes. It is an ongoing national responsibility, one that demands consistency, courage, and compassion long after the banners come down.



HRC joined Child Justice Forum and other stakeholders in commemorating 16 Days Activism against Gender-Based Violence at Lusaka Magistrate Complex

Mumbwa Public Hearing Reveals Early Marriages



Learners at Kasalu Primary School of Nangoma making submissions during a Public Hearing

The Human Rights Commission of Zambia (HRC-Z) has heard that between June 2024 and June 2025, Nangoma Mission Hospital delivered 928 pregnant girls between the ages of 13 and 19 years and 68 of these pregnancies were delivered through cesarean section.

These glaring statistics revealing the extent of the early pregnancy problem came to light during public hearings conducted in Mumbwa and Nangoma areas of Mumbwa District on 18th and 19th November 2025, led by HRC-Z Vice Chairperson, Dr. Felicity Kayumba Kalunga, Commissioner Laura Mary Miti and Commissioner Panic Mukamambo Malawo Chilufya.

Delivering a submission to the Commissioners, Judith Katebe, a Midwife at Nangoma Mission Hospital, noted that out of the 928 teen deliveries, 21 were between the ages of 13 and 14 years.

One of the reasons attributed to contributing to these high numbers was the rise of illegal mining in the area,

which was exposing girls to sexual exploitation.

Mr. Rogers Mwiya, a Nangoma resident, noted that some illegal miners, especially foreign nationals, were using money to lure vulnerable girls into sexual relationships, leading to pregnancies and exposing them to sexually transmitted infections.

This was confirmed by pupils from Kasalu Primary School of Nangoma area who said that the prospect of economic benefits is leading their fellow pupils to engage in sexual activities with illegal miners, thereby falling pregnant and others getting married.

Several petitioners submitted various reasons for child marriages and early pregnancies, such as poverty, child neglect, alcohol abuse, peer pressure and low education levels, among other reasons.

On child neglect, Mr. Enoch Siame, a Mumbwa Resident, called for stiff punishment of parents or guardians who allow their children to

drop out of school, as their actions put girls at high risk of being abused sexually or forced into marriage.

Meanwhile, Chief Mumba of the Kaonde speaking people in Mumbwa District expressed deep concern about the rising cases of child marriages in his chiefdom, saying, "...I have personally intervened in marriages of young children, I have dissolved marriages in this community and taken children back to school."

Dr. Kalunga commended the Chief for his strong leadership on ending child marriages in his chiefdom, emphasising that traditional leaders had the power to influence families, shape norms and protect vulnerable children in society.

In closing the public hearings, Dr. Kalunga assured the petitioners that the Commission would compile and evaluate their submissions, with the results informing the Commission's next steps for the protection of children.

Braille Booklets advance inclusive access to PSEA information

For many persons with visual impairments, access to critical information on protection from sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA) has long remained out of reach, not because it did not exist, but because it was not accessible.

That reality took an important step towards change with the launch of Braille booklets on PSEA at the Zambia Agency for Persons with Disabilities (ZAPD) offices in Lusaka in November 2025.

The launch marked a significant milestone in Zambia's journey towards inclusive human rights education, ensuring that protection information reaches everyone, regardless of disability.

Produced in English, Nyanja, and Bemba, the Braille booklets were widely welcomed by stakeholders as a practical demonstration of the principle that no one should be left behind.

Speaking during the event, Human Rights Commission Vice-Chairperson, Dr. Felicity Kayumba Kalunga, described the initiative as



DMMU National Coordinator, Mr. Norman Chipakupaku, shakes hands with a stakeholder with a visual impairment during the Launch of the PSEA braille booklets at the ZAPD Offices in Lusaka

a meaningful step towards building a society that respects dignity, equality, and access to information for all.

"The production of these Braille IEC materials safeguards human dignity and affirms that protection must be inclusive and accessible to all. This initiative reinforces the right to access information as provided for under the Access to Information Act No. 24 of 2023 and aligns with our national commitment to leaving no one behind," Dr. Kalunga said.

The importance of accessible information was also highlighted in the keynote address by Disaster Management and Mitigation Unit (DMMU) National Coordinator, Mr. Norman Chipakupaku, who announced that Government would integrate PSEA into its disaster preparedness, response, and recovery plans.

"These materials are not just symbolic, they represent preparedness. Inclusive communication saves lives because when people are informed, they are empowered," said Mr. Chipakupaku.

For ZAPD, the initiative reflects long-standing efforts to address systemic barriers faced by persons with disabilities. ZAPD Director General, Mr. Frankson Musukwa, noted that people with visual impairments have historically faced challenges in accessing information in formats that meet their needs.

"This is why, together with UNFPA, we developed these Braille IEC materials to ensure that persons with disabilities are not excluded from receiving critical protection information. Our goal is to ensure that every Zambian, regardless of disability, has access to knowledge that empowers and protects them," said Mr. Musukwa.

The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), which supported the development of the booklets, underscored that inclusion is not achieved through isolated actions but through sustained commitment. UNFPA Country Representative Mr. Seth Broekman emphasized that accessible information is a cornerstone of effective protection systems.

"True inclusion means ensuring that services, systems, and information reach everyone, including those who have historically been marginalised,"

he said, noting that the Braille booklets form part of broader efforts to strengthen inclusive protection mechanisms.

From the perspective of persons with visual impairments, the impact of the initiative is both practical and empowering. Speaking on behalf of the Zambia National Federation of the Blind (ZANFOB), Mr. Lazarous Hakalebula commended UNFPA and its partners for translating key protection messages into Braille.

"Lack of information is a disaster for the visually impaired," he said. "By translating these documents, UNFPA has ensured that people with disabilities can now participate equally and access information that protects their rights."

He further encouraged continued collaboration with organisations representing persons with disabilities to ensure that such initiatives reach communities where they are needed most.

The launch, attended by representatives from government institutions, civil society, and disability rights organisations, served as a powerful reminder that protection is most effective when it is inclusive.



Braille Booklets on PSEA launched at ZAPD Offices in November 2025



Human Rights Commission Vice-Chairperson, Dr. Felicity Kayumba Kalunga, (1st from left, DMMU National Coordinator and UNFPA Country Representative and other stakeholders holding Braille Booklets during the launch at ZAPD Offices Lusaka

From Law to Compassion: Strengthening Child Protection in Zambia

Protecting children requires more than strong laws, it demands informed institutions, vigilant communities, and compassionate action. This message was powerfully reflected in a recent milestone by the Human Rights Commission-Zambia (HRC-Z) when an intensive child safeguarding training for its members of staff was conducted in October 2025.

HRC-Z held a two-week intensive training workshop aimed at strengthening the capacity of its staff to monitor, investigate, and respond to child rights violations

in line with the Children's Code Act No. 12 of 2022. Held from 6th to 17th October at The Wish Executive Lodge in Kafue District, the training brought together 70 officers from all ten provinces, underscoring the Commission's nationwide mandate to protect children's rights.

Facilitated by the Child Justice Forum with support from UNICEF, the workshop equipped participants with in-depth knowledge of the Children's Code Act, child safeguarding principles, and practical procedures for handling cases of abuse.

Officers were trained to detect violations early, document and investigate cases professionally, and refer matters appropriately to ensure justice and redress for child victims. Trainers drawn from the Judiciary, academia, and the human rights community provided diverse perspectives on child protection and access to justice. The training marked a significant step in strengthening the Commission's oversight role and reaffirmed HRC-Z's commitment to ensuring that every child in Zambia enjoys the right to safety, dignity, and protection from all forms of abuse.



HRC Director General, Ms. Mbololwa Wamunyima (4th from Right) with staff and members of the Child Justice Forum during the training workshop in Kafue District

Actualising the Right to Access to Information in Zambia

The Human Rights Commission Zambia (HRC-Z) has taken a key step towards making the right to information a reality by presenting draft guidelines for the implementation of the Access to Information (ATI) Act No. 24 of 2023 to stakeholders for validation.

The validation workshop, running from 30th September to 4th October 2025 in Chilanga District, Lusaka, brought together State and Non-State actors committed to advancing transparency, accountability, and citizen engagement. The meeting was convened by the ATI Coalition, a network of 21 civil society organisations advocating for effective access to information in Zambia.

Developed by a Technical Working Group comprising the Ministry of Information and Media, the Ministry of Justice, the Judiciary, and HRC-Z, the draft Guidelines are intended to provide practical direction on how public and private institutions can operationalise the ATI Act. Stakeholder input was critical to ensuring the Guidelines reflected real-world needs and built consensus for effective implementation.

Opening the workshop, MISA Zambia Chairperson Lorraine Mwanza Chisanga underscored the ur-



HRC Registrar, Mr. Mahape Libakeni (Left), HRC Director – Education, Training and Advocacy, Mr. Mweelwa Muleya at the ATI Guidelines validation meeting in Chilanga District

gency of full implementation, noting that the period of progressive compliance concludes in June 2025.

ATI Coalition Vice Chairperson Guess Nyirenda welcomed the enactment of the law but emphasized that the true test lies in putting it into practice. Participants highlighted the importance of public sensitisation, proactive disclosure, and stronger collaboration between

government, civil society, and the private sector to ensure that access to information becomes a lived reality for all Zambians.

The guidelines have since been published in the Government Gazette in accordance with Section 38 of the ATI Act, marking an important milestone in Zambia's journey towards open, accountable, and transparent governance.

Everyone has the right to seek, receive and impart information of all kinds.

International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 2 (1).



MISSION

To ensure the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms for all people in Zambia; through advocacy, investigations and appropriate redress of human rights violations, and monitoring of compliance with human rights standards and obligations.



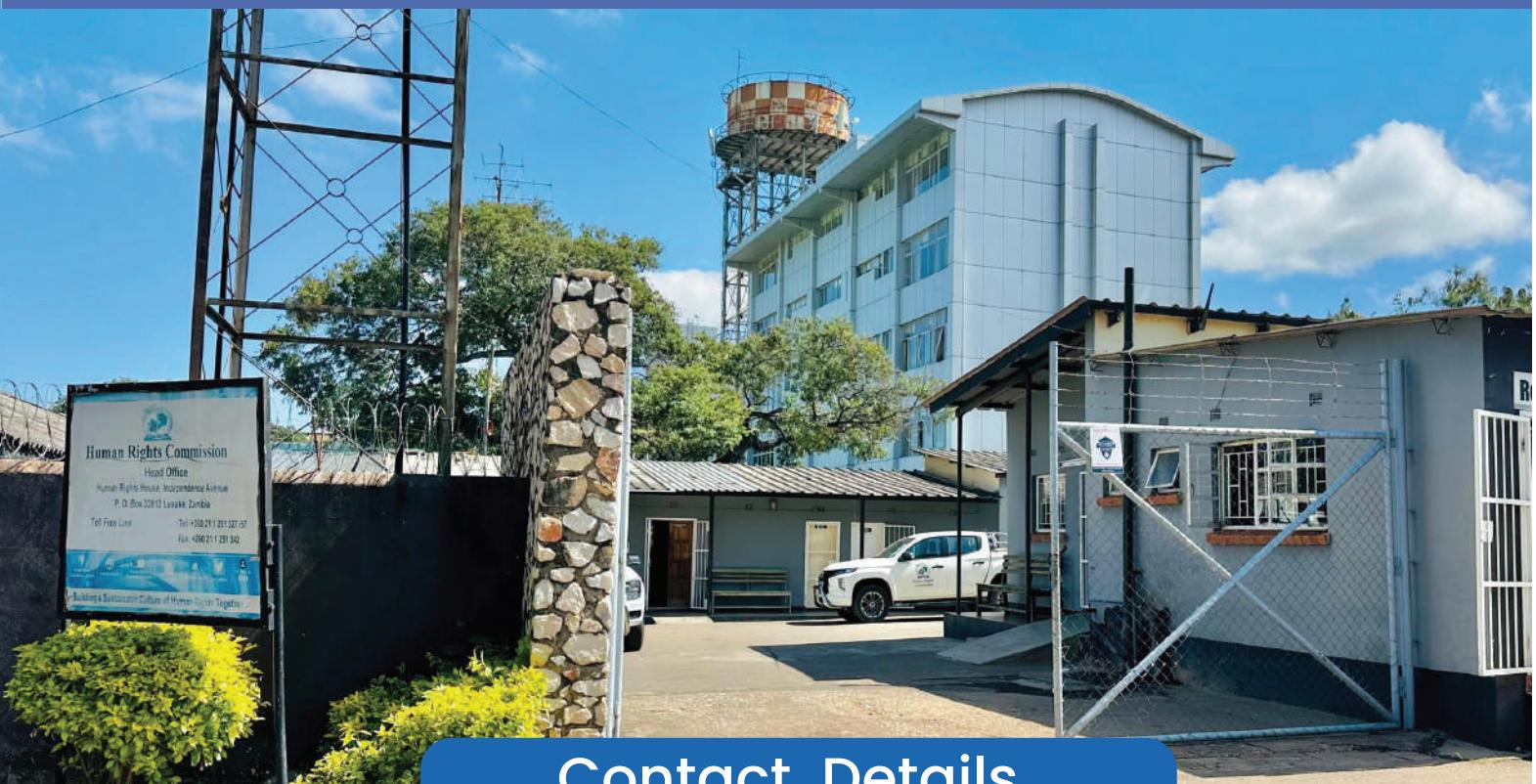
VISION

A society that respects and upholds human rights for all persons in Zambia.



VALUES

HRC pledges to serve its clients with
impartiality
#integrity
transparency and
#accountability
while upholding virtues of
independence in the
discharge of its duties



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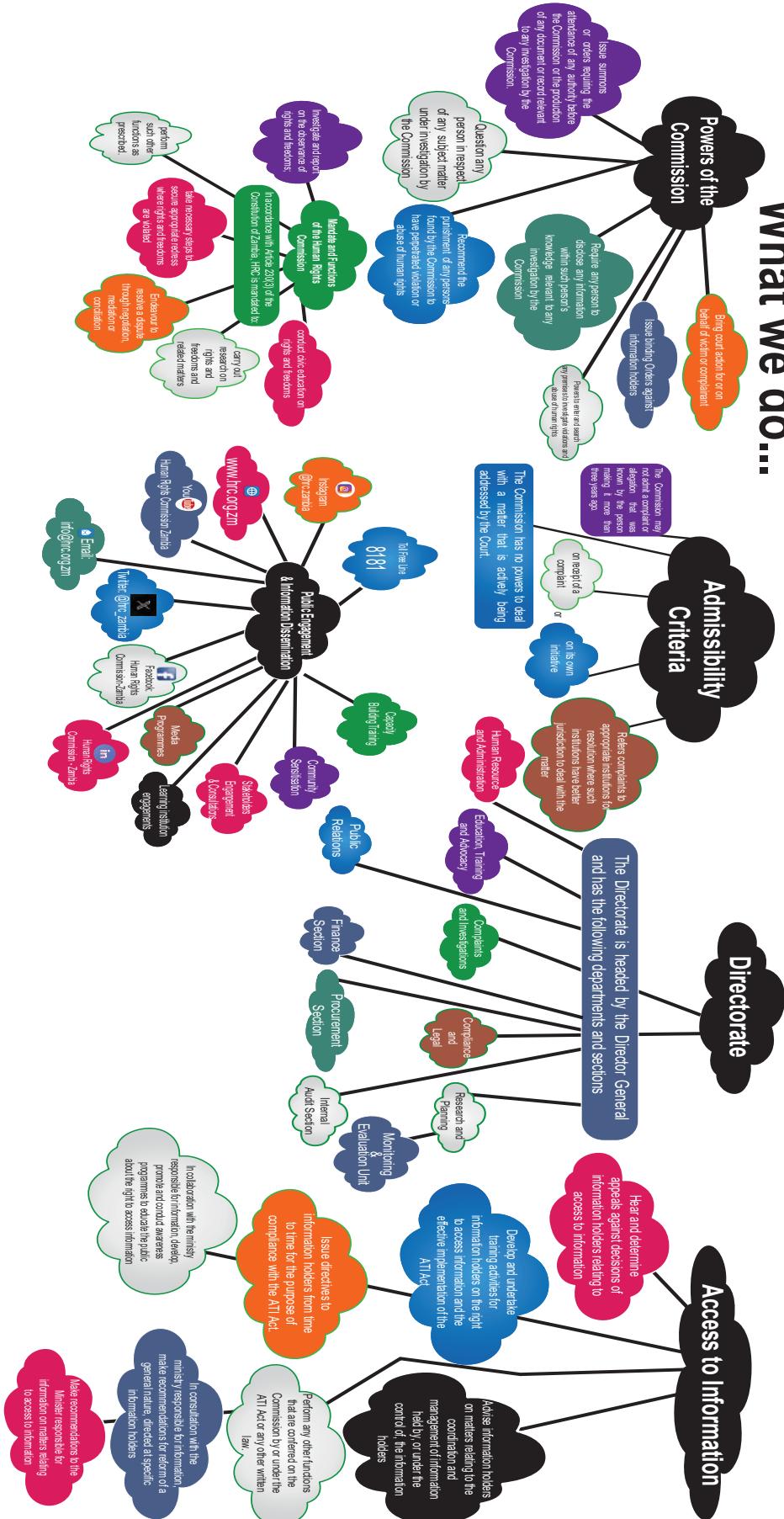


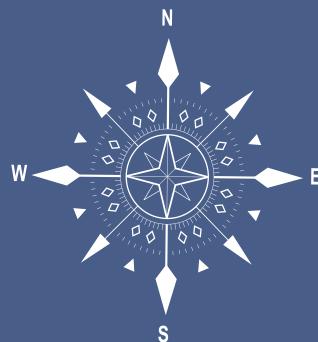
Human Rights Commission-Zambia

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What we do...





MAP OF ZAMBIA SHOWING LOCATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION - ZAMBIA'S PROVINCIAL OFFICES



CONTACT DETAILS FOR HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION-ZAMBIA'S PROVINCIAL OFFICES

1 Lusaka Province
Lusaka: +260 251 327 / 251 357

2 Central Province
Kabwe: 0957 445 833

3 Copperbelt Province
Ndola: 0954 170 753

4 Eastern Province
Chipata: 0954 170 748

5 Luapula Province
Mansa: 0958 122 370

6 Muchinga Province
Chinsali: 0958122368

7 Northern Province
Kasama: 0958122369

8 Northwestern Province
Solwezi: 0958 122 373

9 Southern Province
Livingstone: 0958 122 375

10 Western Province
Mongu: 0958 122 374